

FAMILY LABOR

tiveness among the coöperating workers, and any deviation from the accepted technique destroys such unison. This, too, the son learns at his father's hands.

At home the son learns that building and repairing the houses, sheds, and other structures of the farm is men's work and that the duty of performing it devolves on the father. He watches his father buy and use all the feeding stuffs needed for farm animals and learns something of the nice adjustment which must be made between the expenditures of this kind and those demanded by the women of the household for food, clothing, and household needs. He finds himself included in the family deliberations which impress upon him the economic interdependence of the family and the division of labor between men and women.

The process is a gradual one. It is an integral part of daily experience protracted over many years. In his earliest childhood, of course, the mother looms larger in the child's consciousness than the father. The child's first duties, as soon as he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands to neighbors and near-by "friends." Soon he is taking his father's meals to him in the fields or going on errands to the nearest shop. Until he is seven and has gone through First Communion, his place is in the house with the women, and his labor is of very little importance. After First Communion, at six or seven, he begins to be thrown more with his elder brothers, and comes to do small chores which bring him more and more into contact with his father and with the other men of the neighborhood. By the time he is ten or eleven he will be brought home from school, if needed, to take his part in the important agricultural work of the year, particularly at spring sowing and hay harvest. But not till he passes Confirmation and leaves school (generally at the same time) does he take on full men's work. Even then, as he becomes adult and takes on more and more of the heavy tasks of the farm work, he never escapes his father's

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462 54 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN IRELAND
593 direction until his father dies or makes over the farm to
883 him at his marriage.

593 If economic apprenticeship is also a process of condition-
ing within the family, so likewise the direction of economic
enterprise coincides with the dominant and controlling role
of the parent within the family. The son is subordinated in
both spheres to his parents, particularly the father. Rather,
the spheres are one.

593 For the child grows up within the full complex of life
within the family. The petty errands which constitute his
867 first steps in farm work are a mere incident in the condi-
tioning he receives and the relationships he builds up with
his fellows. He develops the sentiments of affection and
dependence upon his mother and the other family members
in those years in the care and attention he receives at their
hands. He learns the code of conduct which constitutes the
folkways of his group and the reciprocal relations within
his family in a gradual process of training over years. This
conduct ranges from the errands he runs for family members
superordinate to him, to the learning of his prayers and the
[864 development of the sentiments which make of sexual be-
684 havior of any kind an offense and of that within the family,
incest.

593 Thus the same landmark in his life which marks his be-
● 857 ginning to do the minor chores of farm work after six or
513 seven marks a change of his life within the household, for
thereafter he sleeps with his brothers and the separation
which begins to take him from his sisters in work and play
now separates them within the household.

593 Later his sharing of chores with his brothers in farm
work is again merely incidental to his long years of life
561 with them. By the same token the commanding position
which the father (and the mother) exercise over him in farm
work is but one aspect of their control. We shall have occa-
sion to see in a later section how this dominance expresses

66 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN IRELAND

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861 as the men's. The coincidence between family status and economic role holds for them as well. Women's work on the small farm is complementary to that of the men, as we have seen, though, of course, it is quite distinct. The young girl growing up on the small farm learns this, just as the young man acquires the masculine techniques. The girl is thrown constantly with the mother and the older women of the household. After she is seven, her pursuits differ completely from those of her brother and, except as she is in very close constant association within the household, she has no working contact with her father.

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868 Many minor tasks fall to the girl as she grows up, particularly driving and milking the cows. Her conditioning prepares her to fill the role her mother occupies in the household. All the interior of the house, the immediate vicinity of courts and haggard where the fuel is stacked, the well, the poultry yard and sheds, are her concern. She learns to milk cows, feed the pig, tend the chickens, and look after all the young animals through helping the older women. She learns the lore of disposing of eggs, butter, and occasionally of some of the vegetable produce of the garden, potatoes and cabbage, and occasionally goes to market with her mother.

In the chief business of the women, the house itself, the preparation and serving of food and the repair and upkeep of clothing, she serves a never-ending daily apprenticeship. A young girl may often be delegated to look after the hearth, make and keep the fires going, etc. Only the mother makes small purchases of food and household goods. Only the mother bakes the great variety of breads. But by the time she leaves school, the girl may be proficient in these tasks too. So also with the butter making. Income derived from this and from poultry belongs to the older woman; the girl has no share until she herself has married.

070 In the past century (and in isolated regions still) most of

THE KINSHIP SYSTEM

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like the sanctions of the exercise of sexual rights in marriage, 593
are part of and take their form in the family group. Conse- 582
quently, in the wider and larger alignments of individuals
springing from the family which make up the kinship sys-
tem, similar prohibitions occur.

For the kindred are the group within which marriage is 582
prohibited. In a sense the formulation of the individuals in 602
it as a group is an abstraction. Kinship bonds come ready 857
formed to the newborn human being. The child is soon
brought to know and adopt requisite behavior and senti-
ments toward the individuals with whom the other persons
of his family are reciprocally bound.

Thus the Irish child very early meets his mother's and 602
father's brothers and sisters; he runs errands and receives 431
small gifts from them; as soon as he is able he carries pres- 571
ents. In later years of boyhood he does odd jobs for them; 857
his labor is lent at cooring; he takes his place with them at
the family table or round the hearth on visiting. At various
times of crisis in his career, such as First Communion, Con-
firmation, and marriage, he receives gifts from them which
signalize the intimacy between him and them. They share
his parent's superordination to him, for they belong to the
same older generation as his parents.

He is very likely, too, to be thrown constantly with their 602
children, especially if they are substantially of the same age, 571
where his uncles and aunts remain within visiting distance. 857
In country regions, such as Luogh, nearly all of the families
are united by complicated, reduplicated bonds of marriage
and descent. There the boys and girls grow up together
in constant association, both as "friends" and companions.
It is with them that the natural course of development cre-
ates bonds of sentiment and mutual aid, quite like those
within the family, which take the form of that "friendliness"
at once obligatory and pleasurable seen in the account of
farm work.

462 tional social life. The boy's first duties, as soon as
593 he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands
● 857 to neighbours and near-by friends. Until he is seven
and passes through first communion, his place is in
the house with the women, and he shares the same
bed with his sisters. After that year, he leaves his
mother's apron strings, and is slowly drawn into
men's ways; he is thrown more and more with his
elder brothers and sleeps with them henceforward.

[291] In remote regions he takes off girl's clothing for
[789] the first time; for girl's clothing has protected
him from the fairies, they say. Both socially and
economically he is becoming a male, but his male
status is still very little. By the time he is ten or
eleven, he is brought home from school when
needed to take part in the important agricultural
work of the year. But not until he passes confirma-
tion and leaves school, usually at the same time,
does he take on full men's work and assume men's
clothing. Even then, as he reaches maturity, and
takes on more and more the heavy tasks of the
farm, he never escapes his father's direction. Only
when his father makes over the farm to him, at
death or at his own marriage, can he assume
command, and with it full adult status.

Economic apprenticeship is thus a process of
conditioning within the family. But there is no
separation of economic and non-economic spheres.
The father's direction of the enterprise coincides
with his dominant, controlling role as parent and

II COUNTRYMEN AT WORK 57

adult; the boy learns work as he learns manhood. 462

Also, the child grows up within the full complex 593
of life within the farm family. His first petty 861
errands are a mere incident in the relationship he 857 ●
builds up with his parents and brothers. He learns
not only his work but the whole code of conduct
which constitutes the folkways of his class, at their
hands. This conduct is itself part of his relation to
them. It ranges all the way from the errands he
runs for his superiors in the family to the learn-
ing of his prayers and the development of the
sentiments which make sexual behaviour of any
kind an offence, and of that within the family,
incest.

Consequently, in so well-knit a group, the com- 462
mand which his father (and his mother) exercises 593
over the son in farm work is only one aspect of
that control. His subordination continues as long
as his father lives. Even though the major work of
the farm devolves upon the son and his brothers,
they have no control of the direction of farm work
nor the disposal of the farm's income. I say the son
and his brothers, for all the sons are equal in this [554]
subordination; rural Ireland knows neither primo- [858]
geniture nor junior right. As long as they remain at
home upon the farm they share this status equally.

The behaviour that reflects this state of affairs 593
can be readily observed. Sons go to market and fair
from the time they are ten or twelve, but they buy
or sell little if anything. Father and sons can be



Fig. 16. Co. Mayo.



Fig. 17. N. Ireland.

The evening milking was often followed by dancing to the music of an itinerant piper, and there were many diversions for the cattle-tenders through the long summer days. Old tales and songs were kept alive among the hills where many of them had their origin. Spinning and knitting occupied the women, and the youngsters amused themselves by cutting and carving wooden objects and by making toys out of rushes—rattles (Fig. 16), cages for butterflies (Fig. 17), dainty rush baskets for gathering "fruogs" (bilberries) (Fig. 18) and ornamental whips and sticks of bound rushes. Little wicker cages were made for catching birds. Various instruments and whistles for calling together the animals were constructed, and there have been discovered deep in the bogs long horns which curiously resemble those still used by the Carpathian shepherds. I have read that in the Scottish Highlands that ancient ceremonial instrument, the bull-roarer (Fig. 113) played a part in the cattle herding. We shall refer to its survival in Ireland in Chapter 19. As in modern Norway, it might be said that "the time spent in the mountain pastures was the happiest time of the year. Every living creature wanted to go to the mountains."

Although this booleying, like the rundale village system which it accompanied and helps to explain, is now almost entirely a thing of the past, it has left many traces in the customs and traditions of the countryside. Hill pastures, now devoted mostly to sheep-rearing and visited only by the shepherd, are still held in common and reckoned in sums, lumps or collops, the unit of mountain grazing which fixes the relative grazing capacity of different kinds of stock. Thus a cow may be reckoned equal to four yearlings, five goats or sheep or say twenty geese. The decline of seasonal nomadism affected the balance of rural life and work and left a summer surplus of young folk who were free to emigrate or to engage in harvesting whether in the east of Ireland or later in Britain, while frequently the women became vagrants during the summer. In Ulster, where the incoming "planters" were bitterly opposed to the "creaghts," as the transhumants were called, the custom explains the ease with which, throughout

342 Ireland, which is the province of the wheel-bellows (Fig. 27)
 352 a contrivance which produces a powerful draught under the
 fire. Another feature of the fireplace is the small keeping-
 holes ("boles") in the wall, which may contain the clay pipes
 or the knitting: they are usually reserved for special purposes
 and seem to have their peculiar association with either male or
 female use. The alarm clock is often kept in one of these
 [805] recesses—on the south side, I have been told, because that is
 the side where the sun tells the time—but there are cabins
 where the rooster is the only time-keeper, his perch being the
 long pole, or, in the old days, the sugán, which crosses the
 cabin in front of the fire and which is used in the daytime for
 drying clothes.

251 Near the fire too is the wooden meal chest or "ark,"
 352 where the oatmeal is stored. One of the ancient customs, now
 almost dead, is the "tramping" of the meal, the children
 ●[857] being periodically placed in the ark, barefooted, to tread it
 down. Alternatively the meal was stored in a large hogshead
 immediately behind the chimney, in the "room," where it
 would be kept dry without taking up the valuable hearth
 space. Under the brace you may perhaps see a lump of bacon
 or a dried fish or two, and this is the place where the horse
 collar is hung in some districts. We shall return to the other
 fireside gear later in the chapter.

354 In some areas, especially in the north and north-west,
 that is the province of the gable hearth, the brace and canopy
 are rarely seen, their place being taken by a stone or brick
 chimney (Fig. 29). It seems probable that houses of the
 outshot type, at least, never had the brace, which would be
 difficult to erect owing to the recessed side-wall. There are
 352 many problems which require study in this connexion. Where
 possible the bed, whether half-recessed in its caillach or not,
 lies at one side of the fire: alternatively there may be a large
 settle—often convertible into a bed—against one of the
 side walls. This is generally a solid piece of furniture, and I
 have seen some very attractive examples of bog-oak.

The most noticeable article of furniture in the room is the
 dresser, which though generally of deal and lacking the fine
 [TEXT CONTINUES TOP OF P. 92 -- ANALYST]

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524 American Indians is the buzz, a rectangular piece of wood or a circular disc of metal which is rotated on a twisted string, by drawing the hands apart, to produce a buzzing sound. It is recorded that the young weavers of 19th century Belfast were fond of playing with the "bummer," and I saw the toy, called a "snorer," in use in north-east Antrim this summer.

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524 Many examples could be given of children's games and rhymes which retain memories of ancient rites. Thus it has been suggested that the game known as "Draw a pail of water" is "the attenuated survival of the religious rite of water worship." Similarly there are hints of foundation sacrifice in "the Devil's Bridge," of marriage by capture in "Nuts in May," of marriage by purchase in "Lords from Spain" and of funeral rites in "Jeannie Jo" and "Green Gravel." These games are not necessarily long established in Ireland—some of them were probably introduced by planters, as in the Appalachian region of the U.S.A.—but they are of wide occurrence and considerable age in other parts of Europe.

754 It is worth putting on record that the aid of magic is still sought in causing illness by making and injuring a wax model of someone to whom ill is wished. It is not five years since a case which resulted in death occurred within a short distance of Belfast. I have no doubt that instances of curious love charms, of raising a wind and so on could still be found, though the old method of burying a black hen alive to bring a fair wind is probably forgotten. The so-called "protective formulæ" such as "God bless the work" and "I wish you luck of the baste" are common currency.

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289 Harvest customs that deserve mention are the cutting of the last sheaf and the wearing of harvest knots. In the north of Ireland, as in many other parts of Europe, it was customary, so long as sickles were the reaping tools—the practice became modified with the use of scythes—for the harvesters to fling their hooks at the last plaited remnant of standing corn. This was known under various names such as neck, churn, hare, granny, carline and cailleach or "collya."

POTS AND PANS

- 252 As throughout Highland Britain it was the dramatic fall in the
 262 price of wheat in the 1880s, thanks to imports from America,
 171 that changed the eating habits of the people and led to a decline
 in the consumption of oaten and barley bread. The commercial
 baking of oven-bread from imported wheat is thus a fairly
 recent development virtually confined to the large towns, es-
 pecially the milling ports, and its distribution through the rural
 areas explains the ubiquitous bread-vans of the country roads.
 We should probably make an exception of the English-settled
 parts of the east coast in the Pale as well as in Bargo. Dublin
 and Drogheda have a rare advantage in Ireland in that, thanks
 to their relatively dry climate, grain need not be kiln-dried
 before milling. The town bakeries cater for country tastes by
 providing an extraordinary variety of cakes and farls as well as
 standard loaves. One of the big Belfast bakeries turns out some
 [256] seventy varieties of plain and fancy bread which are distributed
 over several Ulster counties. In the Scottish Highlands, simi-
 larly, most of the bread consumed comes from a Glasgow
 factory: home-made, even locally-made, yeast-bread is almost
 [493] unknown. 'The van' is therefore one of the necessities of life:
 its forerunner was the tea-van, famous for its fast high-stepping
 horses, once a familiar sight in the Irish countryside.

- The baking of thin bread has steadily declined under this
 262 urban competition. White bread and stewed tea are woefully
 252 inadequate as a staple diet but there were perhaps greater
 gastric evils in indigestible soda bread made with unboiled
 water from surface wells. The use of buttermilk and above all a
 large consumption of butter were, however, traditional. On
 balance the housewife has profited, for she was truly the slave
 of the fire. Thin bread has the disadvantage of going stale
 quickly, and a good housewife was expected always to have
 fresh bread ready. Labourers have been known to refuse to
 work on farms where there was not a daily baking of bread.
 The baking board or trough hung ready to hand on the wall,
 251 and the meal was stored near the fire to keep it dry (Figs. 18
 and 21). Old people have told me how, when they were children,
 [857] they were called on periodically to tramp the meal in its wooden
 chest or ark, treading it down with bare feet to drive out the
 air and lessen the risk of its going musty. In Wales the meal-

LAZY-BEDS

two feet or as much as eight feet wide, the furrows between them being from one to three feet in width. These dimensions and the different methods of building the ridges are intimately related to the depth and quality of the soil and to the types of spade used in each locality. Both the breadth and length of the ridges are commonly measured by the spade, and the term score-ground, applied in Co. Kerry to potato land let in conacre, that is from year to year, refers to twenty spade-lengths. When the crop is lifted the ridges are roughly levelled, and the following year they are split, that is the new furrow is dug in the middle of the old ridge.

It is not easy to describe the process of ridge-making with the spade and impossible to portray all the varieties of technique employed. It is back-breaking work, yet it is performed with an easy rhythm and a seemingly effortless and almost mechanical efficiency. In its simplest form the grassy strip which is to become the furrow is notched centrally down its length and the sods on each side are each undercut by two spade-thrusts and levered over on to the beds, where they lie flat, grass to grass, like closed hinges (Fig. 48). Normally the manure has already



FIG. 48. Lazy-beds.

been spread on the beds, and if the potato sets have also been planted all that is needed to complete the ridge is to break the earth of the furrow and shovel it on to the ridge. More commonly, however, the beds are fully prepared before the sets are planted, and it is the task of the women and children to follow the ridgemakers and thrust the potatoes into the sandwich of sods and manure. This is the method appropriate to the wetter

LAZY-BEDS

241 west, for it means that the ridges can be prepared beforehand as opportunity offers. What is known as the Munster mode of planting 'with the back of the spade' is to thrust the narrow spade through the inverted top sod and drop the set behind the blade as it is levered forward. On the average three rows of potatoes go to each bed, but there are also one- two- and four-set ridges.

241 A special wooden dibber known as the steeveen, kibbin (little
412 spade) or gugger is employed for planting in Cavan, Leitrim and Longford and may perhaps be correlated with the heavy loy as another archaic tool which has kept its hold in that area. The steeveen with its conical head (Fig. 49) will break through the toughest sod and open a way for the young sprouts. Typi-
[462] cally 'guggering' is woman's work, the children following,
[857] dropping in the sets and closing the hole with a fork or a mell. I like to think that the steeveen is descended from that universal tool of the women of humble cultivating societies, the digging or planting stick, remote ancestor of the spade. It is a plausible theory that the crops of wheat and barley sown by the first Irish cultivators were planted in this way in the ashes of burnt woodland on the mountainsides. Larger dibbers or 'stamps' with several teeth for planting corn were used until quite recently in some counties, for example Armagh (Fig. 49).



FIG. 49. Dibbers and (centre) sowing fiddle, Co. Armagh.

They are probably the descendents of specimens introduced by English 'planters' of the early seventeenth century. It is the
[539] dibberhole which is referred to in the rhyme which has outlived the action it once accompanied:

LAZY-BEDS

idle Scots shepherd who with his crook knocked a white sea²⁴¹
pebble into a rabbit hole among the dunes. And one recalls⁵²⁶
the theory that the game of cricket, with its 22-yard pitch, had
its beginnings in the English openfields among ploughboys
(players) and landlords' sons (gentlemen) who threw clods
at the ploughman's marking sticks across the chain-wide acre
strips completed at the end of a day's work. At any rate cricket
has not strayed far from the English openfields and village
greens, and in Ireland it clings to the larger towns and to the
English-settled areas along the east coast.

Among other implements for preparing the soil the roller is²⁴¹
probably of no great antiquity, though examples of wood or⁴¹²
stone are of considerable interest. Alternatively, flat boulders or
specially-built clod-slipes are driven over the ploughed ground,
the driver being carried along on the platform thus provided
and adding to its weight. I have seen the former in Co. Wexford
and the latter in Co. Down. In the west the breaking of clods
on the ridges is done by hand with a heavy rake (Fig. 1), and
the 'harrows' which were formerly pulled by the horse's tail
was a similar implement, a block of wood armed with a few
wooden teeth. Even the larger harrows were a source of amuse-
ment to visiting farmers like Arthur Young, 'more fit to raise
laughter than soil', as one observer put it.

The weeding and protection of the young corn were serious²⁴¹
matters in the days when a patch of oats provided a family with
its only cereal food. The tethering and herding of livestock were
universal habits, and hand-weeding was another task for the^[857]
young folk. O'Flaherty writes of Connacht: 'They go and
lie prostrate or sit upon the corn, to weed it with their bare
hands, leaving nothing behind but pure corn'.¹ Swedes are
almost invariably weeded and thinned by hand. Thistles grow-²⁴¹
ing in corn or flax are pulled with special pincers or 'clips'⁴¹²
made either of iron or more usually of wood, of a type which is
illustrated in the Luttrell Psalter. The very similar French
weeders known as Havre pincers were also used for catching
eels. Docks were removed with a heavy forked spud (Fig. 50).
There were other less arduous ways of inducing a bounteous
crop. The custom of placing a sickle in the corn-field at the

¹R. O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaught* (1684), 59.

TURF AND SLANE

372 hands into cakes and piled against a wall until dry enough to
237 carry home.¹

314 After lying spread on the ground for a week or two the turves
are footed, that is a dozen or so are put to lean together in the
shape of a pitched roof, to catch the wind (Fig. 64). This is
[462] work for women and for children, who are, in some districts,
[857] given a week's holiday from school. Through the months of
June and July and often into August there is constant coming
and going as the peats are turned and built into larger and
larger piles, turn-foots, castles, rickles, lumps and clamps—
the names and the shapes show considerable regional variation
—until they can be ricked or stacked on the bog ready to be
carried to the farms as opportunity offers. The wind is the main
drying agent, and once dried the peats acquire a waterproof
skin. A well-built stack will throw off the rain, but it is usual in
the west to thatch with rushes and add a coping of sods or
stones against the wind. Open-sided turfsheds specially built
[343] of wood or stone are the exception rather than the rule. A
favourite place for the stack is against the house gable, where it
provides a protective warmth even before the turf is burnt.
The fuel is taken into the house in baskets, creels or wights, and
a small supply is kept handy by the fireside or stored, as in the
Aran Islands, on the kitchen loft (Pl. 9, 2).



FIG. 64. Stages in the drying and stacking of turf (not to scale; the stack, right, is about 9 feet high).

Some lowland bogs are too waterlogged to be cut into turves, and if no slane-turf is available the black turf-mud is moulded by hand into bricks or balls which are stacked to dry. In some counties, for instance Meath and Cavan, mud turf is highly prized and its preparation follows a well-ordered routine. After

¹C. R. Browne and A. C. Haddon, *The Aran Islands*.

FIXED FESTIVALS

Easter would take us away from our present subject but mention must be made of some of the folk practices connected with Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, Easter and Whitsuntide. Shrove Tuesday (Shraft) was a time for hunting the hare, and for feasting in preparation for Lent. A portion of the meat was not eaten but hung in the rafters. It was the great day of the year for marriages, and on that night tricks of many kinds were played on unmarried adults and on courting couples who had not fulfilled their promise. They were serenaded with horn-blowing; animals were tied to the doors of their houses, and cart wheels were rolled down hill. At Ardmore in Co. Waterford a piece of symbolic horseplay was performed by the young men on Ash Wednesday. A hollowed stone with a hole in the centre was the scene of the play. In the hole was stuck a wattle with a handful of tow tied to its top, and unmarried women were made to dance around the stone, holding the tow and spinning while they danced. 'The youths then terminated their amusements by dragging them through the village seated on old logs of wood.'¹

Good Friday was an important day in the farmer's year, the luckiest day on which to begin the sowing of corn. There was an aversion to the use of iron and to the shedding of blood on Good Friday, which was a favourite day for visiting holy wells and the graves of the dead. Shell-fish were eaten, and visits to the shore were enlivened with games and horse-racing. On Easter Day the young folk would be up early in the morning to see the sun dance, and during the day vast quantities of eggs were consumed. The colouring and rolling of eggs are customs kept up by children in many districts. A special Easter Day dance, for which the prize was a large cake exhibited on a garlanded churn-staff, is popularly supposed to have given rise to the expression 'taking the cake', in the sense of beating all comers. If Easter was a lucky time, ominous superstitions attached to Whitsuntide, for example persons born at that time were supposed to have the evil eye, to be fated to die a violent death, or to take a life. A chicken would sometimes be killed in the hands of a Whitsun child to serve as a substitute slaughter. To cross water or go to sea at Whitsun was to invite death by drowning.

¹E. Fitzgerald, *J.R.S.A.I.* (1856), 43.

26 • THE LAND AND THE SEA

tudes and practices; for the islanders do not wish to jeopardize unemployment assistance and old age benefits, nor to be taxed in the future, and thus closely guard sources and amounts of income, even from relatives and friends. 433 [124]

Division of Labor

The division of labor between the sexes is more dichotomous today than it was at the turn of the century, when there was an extensive sharing of the same tasks by men and women. The latter now restrict their economic activities to the home, for the most part, especially if they must care for infants and young children. As soon as children can speak and walk, they help their mothers perform household chores and run errands, such as carrying messages and procuring groceries in the shops. But at age seven, following First Communion, boys spend less time with their mothers and come to take on small jobs which throw them more and more into contact with their older brothers, their fathers, and other men of the island. By the time young adolescents pass Confirmation and leave school, at the time of puberty, they are able to perform most adult economic tasks, and their labor is of utmost importance to the family. 462 178 857 •

Among the major jobs performed by women outside of the household round, and these by only a few younger women, are cleaning fish, carrying seaweed, planting potatoes, haying, growing vegetables, feeding and milking cattle, and caring for poultry. They also knit, crochet, ready wool for weaving, and tailor clothes for themselves and their families, as well as make sweaters, belts, and shawls for sale. In the several homes which accommodate tourists during the summer months, most of the responsibilities for their care fall on the women of the household. Men also do the tasks associated with fishing, farming, and the care of large livestock just listed, and they participate in the job of thickening wool; all of the other subsistence and income activities are exclusively male ones. 462 [252] [241] [231] [286] [294] [437]

In the past, when fishing was a more practiced and laborious occupation than it is now, women not only aided men gut and cure fish, but they baited lines and did other affiliated chores as well. They also participated to a greater degree than today in collecting seaweed and in planting, cultivating, and harvesting crops of all varieties. Their involvement in the economic life of the island often demanded that they transport heavy loads manually for long distances, especially when they cared for all of the needs of both large and small livestock and aided in kelp-making. It is not difficult to comprehend why women are mystified at the complaints of their single daughters about the hardships that young married women must endure. 226 [178] [222] [487] [561] [178]

Most folk admit that members of the present generation work less strenuously than did those of two generations ago, when harsh landlords rather than a benevolent government intruded so importantly into their lives. There is in Inis Beag a widespread feeling of guilt among men, seldom expressed openly, about being "lazy." It is my observation that island men, on the whole, put in fewer hours of labor and expend less energy than workers in a typical industrial plant in America. Inis Beag emigrants who return from England for visits invariably 178 461 561

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ous and high in Inis Beag so as to prevent the sparse soils from being blown away by Atlantic gales; the truth of the matter is that fences serve as boundaries, are repositories for uprooted rocks that farmers, understandably, do not wish to transport long distances, and by their very construction provide a source of income. Once a field is leveled, it is spread with sand, compost, and sometimes indigenous soils carried from other areas to enrich the new garden. This is a job which is carried on the year around, and children often are pressed into service, loading creels with sand from the strand and common land and driving laden animals to the plots above.

Newly made fields can grow potatoes two years in succession before being fallowed, but old ones must lie fallow four years until the eelworm disappears. The folk, however, plant spuds in their old plots every six to ten years, when moss has accumulated to such a degree that the growth of grass sufficient for grazing and haying is impeded. The potato planting technique is known as the "ridge-and-furrow" or "lazy-bed" method on the mainland, but these terms are not used in Inis Beag. Setting a garden involves first of all constructing parallel "ridges," about 30 inches in width, the length of a field. "Ditches" are dug with a spade, and sods are "turned over" onto strips of seaweed; then more dirt is "trenched" over other seaweed, compost, guano, and chemical fertilizers placed in the center of the ridges (see Fig. 6). The whole procedure is called "manuring," and two months later the garden is again trenched with dirt distributed at the base of the sprouting vines. Between the time of seeding and harvesting, the plot is weeded by hand once or twice and sprayed two or three times with a mixture of copper sulphate and water to combat the potato blight.

Potato seeds are purchased in sacks from the agricultural agent or obtained from the previous year's crop, and it takes almost 100 pounds of seed to plant a



Figure 6. Soil being trenched in setting a garden

244 quarter-acre garden. The seed potatoes are cut so that each segment has two "eyes," and they are "stabbed" into the ridges in three rows with a digging stick, deep enough to escape the foraging of birds and rats, yet above the decaying seaweed which can "burn" the seed and cause it not to yield. It is not uncommon for women and children to stab seeds while the man of the house is trenching ridges in another part of the field. Many kinds of spuds are grown by the islanders, some of which are "early" and can be harvested before the end of June; the folk argue the relative merits of varieties of potatoes just as they do the use of fertilizers and farming techniques.

221 Planting must be completed before the cuckoo arrives in late April and
244 sounds its call, and the person who is still seeding when the bird first is heard is
626 the subject of ridicule. The laggard in some parts of Ireland is called a "cuckoo farmer," and it is said in Inis Beag that one who is "lazy about planting is lazy about everything." A tale is told of a Castle villager who saw another man, considered by the islanders to be overly indolent, cutting potato seeds in early April, whereupon he climbed the wall of the castle and imitated the song of the cuckoo. The victim of the practical joke gave up his job in disgust and fed the seed to his poultry. My wife and I witnessed a heated argument in a pub over the date of arrival of the first cuckoo of 1960. Word was passed among the men, some of whom were still planting, that a lighthouse keeper had heard the song five days before. The keeper was denounced as an exaggerator and "troublemaker," and agreement was reached that the bird always is heard first in Low Village and not at the back of the island. The official date of the cuckoo's arrival later was set at April 27th—15 days after its alleged appearance at the lighthouse.

244 "Late" potatoes are harvested from the ridges by spade as needed from mid-July until the end of October, at which time the gardens are emptied (see Fig. 7). The harvested spuds are separated in the fields into those to be fed to livestock, those to be used for seeding the next year, and those to be eaten; then they are transported by horse or ass to be stored in outbuildings. Just as the person who has failed to complete seeding by the time the cuckoo arrives is censured by his neighbors, so is the one who has not removed all of his potatoes from the ground by mid-November. As a man said to me when evaluating potential sons-in-law, "The father of a girl would think twice about marrying off his daughter to a man who didn't have his spuds in by the middle of the month."

242 Supplementing the potato dominated diet of the folk are other locally
244 grown vegetables: cabbages, carrots, onions, turnips, parsnips, and lettuce. They are planted between March and May in ridges in much the same manner as spuds—on fallowing land, in small areas within fields containing indigenous soils which have been improved for this purpose, and in gardens in the villages where they are readily accessible. The more prosperous Inis Beag families also avail themselves of canned peas, beans, and carrots sold in the shops. It is usual for men to plant vegetables, but both men and women tend them to maturity and collect the plants after early September as they are needed for the table.

246 Once the potato fields are emptied, most farmers plant grass in them before
221 the coming of winter. This allows the hay to be cut in June and July of the following year, after which more grass will come in for fall and winter pasturage. Grass

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household. Some cats have reverted to a wild state and roam the back of the island, sheep occasionally are killed by hungry dogs, and young people will entertain themselves by baiting dogs to fight. By and large, animals, especially asses, in Inis Beag are treated roughly or with indifference.

Fishing

It is estimated that between 30 and 50 three-men crews from Inis Beag fished regularly almost the year around at the beginning of the century. At that time there were ten families of fisherfolk—six in Low Village, two in High, and one each in the other two communities—who subsisted mainly on money obtained from the sale of their catches or by bartering fish for needed goods and services. Only farming and kelp-making intermittently interfered with the fishing regime of landholders, and fishing ceased altogether only for parts of December and January, when inclement weather and the Christmas season intruded. Women and children were deeply involved in the fishing endeavor, just as they were in farming and livestock rearing, to free their menfolk for fishing. Crews ranged the coast of Inis Beag and neighboring islands, the two sounds, the mainland coast for 20 miles, and Atlantic shallows 5 to 8 miles offshore. Lines 40 fathoms in length were "shot" for ling and cod, and nets over a mile in length were drifted to ensnare spring mackerel. At times when fish were particularly abundant, fishermen would be out daily for a week or two, arising long before dawn to have their lines down before daybreak, and returning home as late as midnight.

Sixty years later, a sharply contrasting situation prevails, wherein not only has the exporting of fish almost been discontinued, but fish no longer rank as a major staple in the diet of the folk and are not even eaten several months of the year. Nine three-men crews fished fairly regularly with nets and lines between February and October of 1960 and exported or sold locally part of their catches, and two crews fished for lobsters. Fishing now is carried on within a mile of the island, and only one crew ventured as far as the mainland in 1960. It was customary in the past for crews to fish for two consecutive days off a mainland peninsula and sleep overnight in their canoes or lodge in a village there, a venture which required over 30 miles of backbreaking labor at the oars. Line fishing today is done in shallow waters, only short nets are employed, and the men do not care to spend long hours at their task. Elders bemoan the present state of affairs for several reasons, one of them being the loss of fishing lore accumulated over the centuries—knowledge of the ocean floor, of deep currents, of the habitats and movements of fish, not to mention knowledge relating to the manufacture and care of fishing gear and fishing techniques themselves.

Most important of the factors which gradually have restricted fishing are the actions of foreign trawlers—particularly Spanish and French ones, the shift of migratory routes of fish, and long range changes in the weather. During the 1890s, foreign trawlers commenced to fish the waters surrounding Inis Beag, and in the decades since they have increased in number and have fished ever closer to the coast, until now they often penetrate within the legal limit. Not only have

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been blessed, to protect the beast from milk pilfering fairies and hag witches. Among the taboos associated with May Day are those prohibiting the visiting of wells before dawn and giving away fire; as regards the latter taboo, to do so is to "give away the luck of the farm" for a year. Flowers are placed on the altars of the two medieval churches in the early morning of May Day, and at one time garlands of flowers shaped like a horseshoe were hung on door posts for luck. Souls of the dead are especially feared on Allhallows' Eve, and are placated in the Catholic tradition a day later on the feast of All Souls. The telling of stories is tabooed on Allhallows' Day, and the fairies are said to spoil wild blackberries for future eating with their before dawn depredations. My wife and I invited in a small group of islanders to celebrate Halloween in 1959, and we spent much of the evening having our fortunes told by an old man as it was done on this night when he was a youth; he poured melted lead through a key handle into a pan of cold water and made his prognostications by interpreting the configurations formed by the quick hardening metal.

Whitsuntide is the week beginning with the feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, but in Inis Beag it extends to the feast of Corpus Christi and is known as the "kinkish time," when once again evil forces hold sway in the island. Usually the weather is "heavy and close" and very changeable, I was told, and people tend to be irritable and more depressed than usual. Men do not cut their hair, nor does anyone wash themselves, during these 12 days. Although the pookah is always a danger, it is more active at this time than during the rest of the year, and children and visitors are warned not to fall asleep outside or even to sit down on the ground unless accompanied by others, whose presence will thwart any attempts by the demon to twist their limbs. Some islanders will not undertake major tasks or decide on important issues during Whitsuntide. Whereas Christmas and Easter are considered "lucky times," the "kinkish time" is unlucky, and those born then may have the evil eye or be destined to die violently or take a life.

In 1960, Corpus Christi was celebrated June 16th—two days after pattern day and eight days before St. John's Eve. The latter is one of several midsummer celebrations reported from Ireland which mark the summer solstice. Boys gather wood and tend a huge bonfire lighted just after sunset on the common land of Inis Beag, and a few islanders carry coals from it to their homes and fields for protection and to guarantee the fertility of their wives and female livestock. A man complained to me that an infection in his son's finger was caused by the failure of the boy to procure a coal from the fire as instructed. On that evening, the folk congregate outside of their cottages and along the terrace roads to watch the hundreds of bonfires alight on the mainland coast. In the past, cows were driven between twin bonfires as at Beltaine, and barren women and those yet to marry leaped over the dying flames. One of the most brilliant satirical novels of Irish life—both cruel and insightful—is Tracy's *The Straight and Narrow Path*. The plot of which focuses on the difficulties encountered by a vacationing British anthropologist after he writes for a newspaper an eye witness account of nuns jumping a St. John's Eve bonfire.

The legends are several and varied in Ireland about the life of St. Martin (O Suilleabhain 1957:252-261). There is no saint of this name who is of Irish

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538 or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said
539 of the tales recited by the *seanchaí*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous
538 anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks—
522 [177] are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of
[123] [832] verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

538 Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October
[220] and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of
[178] [521] the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the
[564] [562] storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis Beag narrators; a *scéalaí* or *seanchaí* might be visited by a group and serve as host, or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

• [851] The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although
[562] as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semi-circle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated
[574] on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

538 Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were be-
561 tween 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often
[868] called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

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[562] tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused
[514] them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

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571 The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There
[535] is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen
[562] and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the
• [857] two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the
cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried
women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other,
while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress
sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart.
574 Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together
834 both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one another's laps, includ-
ing women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indiffer-
ence, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the
intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

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533 Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist
[123] with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an
574 hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while
273 stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or
[533] one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the
[535] activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts
prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and
milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and
glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains
it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the
pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

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264 Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments
[516] are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the chil-
dren, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other
men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children
are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and
includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy.
[351] Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the
574 table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after every-
535 one is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The
remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the
sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as
dawn approaches.

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579 My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an
[123] islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight,
[517] when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out
between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The
following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame
of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the
same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years,
574 "rowdiness" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at
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their exhortations. The most common theme is "controlling one's passions," but two others have often been addressed in the missionizing effort: abstaining from intoxicating drink and maintaining the faith as an emigrant. Collections are made by children to support the endeavor, and a list of contributors and their respective donations is displayed publicly. This technique of social control is also used by the curate at the several yearly offerings. A mission creates an emotionally charged atmosphere on the island, which continues for weeks after the departure of the clerics.

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The seeds of repression are planted early in childhood by parents and kin through instruction supplemented by rewards and punishments, conscious imitation, and unconscious internalization. Although mothers bestow considerable affection and attention on their offspring, especially on their sons, physical love as manifested in intimate handling and kissing is rare in Inis Beag. Even breast feeding is uncommon because of its sexual connotation, and verbal affection comes to replace contact affection by late infancy. Any form of direct or indirect sexual expression—

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such as masturbation, mutual exploration of bodies, use of either standard or slang words relating to sex, and open urination and defecation—is severely punished by word or deed. Care is taken to cover the bodies of infants in the presence of siblings and outsiders, and sex is never discussed before children. Several times my wife inadvertently inquired as to whether particular women were pregnant, using that word before youths, only to be "hushed" or to have the conversation postponed until the young people could be herded outside. The adults were so embarrassed by the term that they found it difficult to communicate with her after the children had departed. She once aroused stupefaction among men on the strand when she attempted unsuccessfully to identify the gender of a bullock about to be shipped off.

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It is in the home that the separation of sexes, so characteristic of Inis Beag life, is inaugurated among siblings in early childhood. Boys and girls in the family remain apart not only when interacting with the parent of the same sex at work, but when playing in and near the cottage and traveling to and from school. Parents and their older offspring read popular religious journals, found in most homes, many of the articles in which deal with sexual morality of the Irish Catholic variety.

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One sociologist (Berger 1963: 66-92) classifies social control methods as those which involve physical violence or its threat (e.g., political and legal sanctions), those which result in economic pressures (e.g., occupation and market place relations), and, finally, those which